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TO ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY 0800
RUEHRY/AMEMBASSY CONAKRY PRIORITY 2278
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHRMAKS/COMFIFTHFLT PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/COMSIXTHFLT PRIORITY
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/CDR USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USEUCOM VAHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/CDR USSTRATCOM OFFUTT AFB NE PRIORITY
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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC//J-3:JOD// PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC//J-1//J-3:JOD// PRIORITY
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RHMFISS/COMSOCAFRICA STUTTGART GE PRIORITY
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 06 STATE 116027

SIPDIS INFORM CONSULS
FOR ALL CHIEFS OF MISSION AND DEPUTY CHIEFS OF MISSION
FROM UNDER SECRETARY PATRICK F. KENNEDY

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [KFLU](#) [AEMR](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [KFLO](#) [TBIO](#) [KSAF](#) [KPAO](#)
PREL, PINR, AMGT, MG
SUBJECT: PREPARING FOR A CRISIS

REF: A) FSINFATC 001346

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SUMMARY

¶1. (U) Crisis situations - whether because of political or social unrest, wars or acts of terrorism, natural catastrophes or human accidents - represent some of the greatest challenges facing the Department, our overseas missions, and the broader USG. While they are typically times of tragedy and challenge, they also present the opportunity for Department personnel and posts to save lives. The Department wants to remind posts of ongoing crisis management obligations, planning resources available to posts, and best practices for those caught in a crisis situation. An event-specific, operationally-detailed message will be sent to posts in the initial stages of a crisis.

PREPARE BEFORE A CRISIS HITS

¶2. (U) Refresh crisis management tools.

(U) A post's crisis management documents - including the post's Emergency Action Plan (EAP), EAP tripwires, and F-77 reports of potential evacuees - are a vital element to an adequate response. These tools are the collective responsibility of the Emergency Action Committee and need to be updated at least annually so that they accurately reflect the situation in a country. Please make sure post's tripwires are up-to-date. Tripwires can be updated through the Crisis and Emergency Planning Application (CEPA).

(U) Post should ensure that its Post Personnel System is current, including personal safehaven information, and that post has access to the Evacuation Management System (EMS), which can assist in emergency planning and tracking employees in a crisis. EMS can be used to create and activate travel itineraries, determine evacuee locations, and update arrival/departure status (including medical evacuations) during a drawdown. Post Personnel feeds data to EMS; therefore it is imperative that posts keep employee data current in case an evacuation is required. EMS can be accessed through HR Online under the HR Applications tab. Posts may request access to EMS by completing the system access form which can be obtained online at the HR/EX HR Overseas Applications website.

13. (U) Be familiar with resources available to you.

(U) The Operation Center's Office of Crisis Management Support (CMS) maintains a SharePoint site with valuable information, including emergency checklists for Chiefs of Mission, evacuation primers, response teams available to posts, and lessons learned from previous crises. Encourage outgoing officers to schedule courtesy calls with the appropriate regional CMS program officer to discuss crisis management best practices and lessons learned. CMS can be reached at 202-647-7640 or SES-O_CMS@state.gov. For consular specific resources,

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please contact the Crisis Management Unit in the Bureau of Consular Affairs at CA-Crisis-Mgt@state.gov.

14. (U) Conduct drills, review procedures, and check supplies regularly.

(U) There is no better way to learn post-specific lessons and to prepare for the real event than to conduct drills. These should be open to a variety of participants, including direct hires, colleagues from other agencies, locally engaged staff, and private American citizens, when appropriate. Use these opportunities to stress-test safehaven locations, post communications systems (e.g., radios) and Alternate Command Centers and coordinate with schools attended by embassy children, etc. Additionally, take seriously the FSI-run Crisis Management Exercises conducted at post and implement the lessons learned. FSI recently released a distance learning course on the Emergency Action Committee, PD543, which we strongly recommend. For additional advice and resources on conducting additional exercises on your own, please contact FSI's Crisis Management Training staff at FSI_Crisis_MgmtIdea@state.gov.

15. (U) Develop host country crisis contacts.

(U) These should include host country first responders, including police, hospital, fire, aviation, and security officials. Establishing solid contacts within appropriate country ministries, and other diplomatic missions can also facilitate information exchange and be invaluable in providing services to private citizens. Local media contacts can assist post in disseminating information to the private U.S. citizen community and aid in dispelling rumors. Additionally, learn from the post's institutional memory: locally employed staff who may have experienced past crises. Incorporate their ideas and best practices into your planning.

ENGAGE AND STAY ACTIVE DURING EARLY STAGES OF A CRISIS

16. (U) Call Ops and your regional bureau early and

often.

(U) Keep the Operations Center (SES-O@state.gov; 202-647-1512) abreast of developing situations, even if information is limited. Ops is the fastest way to mobilize Washington support and consolidate phone and e-mail inquiries to post, as it can help coordinate conference calls with appropriate Department and USG offices for you.

17. (U) Convene frequent, effective EACs.

(U) An established agenda and time limit keeps members focused on the issues at hand. If applicable, convene digital EACs with constituent posts and in-country military counterparts to coordinate response. Relay via Ops vital steps taken by the EAC or important conclusions reached, rather than waiting for the EAC summary cable to go through.

18. (U) Establish post-wide interagency task forces.

(U) Establish a post task force at the first hint of a pending crisis. Creating several teams consisting of a few members each might be advisable for 24/7 coverage, depending on the situation. Remember to have a representative of the Public Affairs Section on the task

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force in order to respond appropriately to any media queries.

19. (U) Start a single, comprehensive log.

(U) The log should contain all significant developments on the ground and actions taken by post. It should be especially attentive to reporting and information passed via secure and non-secure voice. It should also track incoming and outgoing Requests for Information (RFIs).

10. (U) Keep Washington informed.

(U) Produce daily (or more frequent) situation reports and pass these to the appropriate Washington players via front-channel cable (and e-mail if necessary). Remember that information (even if incomplete) gives principals confidence that post has the situation in hand. Knowing the rationale behind actions taken or not taken is especially important for Washington policy-makers. Focus particularly on the safety and security of American citizens, any assistance requested, political/security situation, post status and staffing levels, and next steps. Some questions to consider:

American Citizen Community:

- Is the American community being targeted?
- Do private Americans live in a cluster, or are they scattered?
- Are they generally affiliated with a U.S. company or group? If so, is post in contact with the HQ of that group or does it need Washington to reach out?
- Will that group assist in evacuation, if necessary?
- What is the estimated number of potential American citizen evacuees? (NOTE: The F-77 should be reviewed and updated at the first signs of a crisis.)
- Will a warden message be issued to alert Americans to the security situation? Is a Travel Alert or Warning warranted? (NOTE: If post's footprint changes, a Travel Alert or Warning may be required.)
- Has post received calls from American citizens requesting assistance? Is the volume of calls manageable? (NOTE: Use of the Consular Task Force software can assist post and the Department in assessing this information.)
- What instructions are being provided to callers?

- Does post require assistance from a task force or from the consular call center in Florida?
- Has post received media inquiries regarding the crisis?

Political/Security Situation:

- Are there anti-American or anti-Western aspects to the unfolding events?
- Are U.S. facilities or personnel being targeted?
- Is the security environment permissive? Can COM employees walk around, travel? Can local citizens?
- What are the prospects for government stability and its ability to maintain order?
- Are local government ministries and local law enforcement working well with embassy staff to address the crisis?
- Is there looting? If so, what are host country security forces doing?
- What is the host government's public position? What is the host government saying privately?
- Are major roads and airports open for commercial travel? - Are the roads to the embassy and residences of official AmCits open?
- Are schools open? Is it safe to travel to and from

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the schools?

- Could consular officers, if necessary, travel to the affected area(s) to provide on-scene support to U.S. citizens?

Post Status:

- Has post accounted for all official Americans?
- Have all official Americans reported for duty?
- Have all embassy LES reported for duty?
- Have all local guards reported for duty at the Embassy and at residences?
- What vehicles and routes will post use to relocate staff if necessary?
- Is the Embassy open for normal business? If not, how long is it anticipated to be closed?
- How many days of supplies (food, water, and fuel) does post have on hand on the compound and at residences of official AmCits?
- Have other foreign missions in the country changed the status of their posts? What instructions have they given to their citizens in the country?
- Is post planning to hold an EAC? When?
- Has post reviewed lists of emergency personnel and informed personnel early on?
- Is post preparing the official community for a possible evacuation, including one that might involve an interim stopover?
- Has post been in contact with transit or interim stopover posts for potential evacuees?

Next steps:

- What can the Department do to assist post?
- Will post require any TDY support to respond to this crisis?
- Will CONS need to provide on-scene assistance to affected U.S. citizens?
- Does post require any additional resources, if so, what?
- What time is the next conference call? Next SitRep?
- Should potential transit posts be looped into calls? Cocoms?
- What are upcoming events of significance?
- What are the main problems/questions with which post is currently struggling?

11. (U) Keep AmCits apprised of the situation.

(U) Always remember the "No Double Standard" policy,

and use the warden network to inform the American community of any specific, credible, non-counterable threats or of post closures. Contact the Crisis Management division of CA/OCS/ACS - CA-Crisis-Mgt@state.gov with any questions.

¶12. (U) Communicate internally.

(U) Use the method most appropriate for post (phone trees, SMS messaging, e-mail distribution lists, social networking sites, radio net, etc.) through the RSO and the CLO to disseminate necessary information in a timely way to staff and families and to limit rumors. Ensure that the concerns of the post community are conveyed to the EAC.

¶13. (U) Monitor post morale.

(U) Be cognizant of crisis-related fatigue as the initial adrenaline of responding to a crisis burns off. If appropriate, encourage personnel to take time off from work. Consider inviting the RMO/P to post, if possible. State's Office of Medical Services has

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resources and counselors ready to assist. Information can be found on the MED website.

¶14. (U) Re-visit tripwires.

(U) As the situation evolves, discuss and submit via cable to the Department reverse tripwires (e.g., events that need to occur/actions that need to take place for post to begin the discussion of lifting Authorized/Ordered Departure).

REGROUPING COLLECTIVELY AFTER A CRISIS

¶15. (U) Lessons Learned.

(U) Conduct a town hall with mission personnel and family members to discuss things that were done well and those that could be improved for next time. Report on lessons learned that could benefit other posts.

¶16. (U) Unwind.

(U) Social events that allow the embassy community to gather and share stories and memories with one another are an important way to decompress, share reactions to the crisis experience, and begin the adjustment back to normal life. Consider post-crisis TDY assistance.

WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU?

¶17. (U) At the outset of the crisis, Crisis Management Support will issue a detailed cable to post with Washington contacts, reporting requirements, advice, etc.

¶18. (U) Depending on the severity, complexity, or sensitivity of the crisis, the Executive Secretary might direct that a Task Force or Monitoring Group be established in the Operations Center as the nexus of all Departmental activity concerning the situation. If so, a cable will be issued providing the contact information. Additionally, CMS will establish a crisis-specific Intellipedia portal as the hub of all crisis-related information for the Department and the interagency community. Note: Post personnel are encouraged to obtain Intellipedia logons in order to provide direct updates to the portals -

<https://www.intelink.gov/passport/Welcome> (accessible from any unclassified computer) and
<https://passport.csp.sgov.gov/passport/Welcome>
(ClassNet)

¶19. The FLO Office is responsible for supporting all employee and family member evacuees under Chief of Mission authority. When a crisis emerges, FLO's Crisis Management and Support Officer reaches out to the Community Liaison Officer (CLO) to offer guidance and support before, during, and after the crisis. If the CLO position is vacant, FLO will offer this assistance to the Management Officer.

¶20. Above all, remember that we are here for you. Please call, e-mail, and cable your needs back to Washington so that we can provide resources and guidance.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, CONTACTS, AND USEFUL LINKS

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Crisis Management Support Sharepoint Site

Emergency Planning Website -
includes DS Emergency Planning staff contact information.

Crisis Management Training Website -
includes links to an EAC distance learning course.

Office of Medical Services Website

For general questions regarding crisis preparation and response, and for F-77 support, please contact Crisis Management Support Staff, 202-647-7640, SES-O_CMS@state.gov.

For advice and resources on conducting additional exercises, please contact the staff of Crisis Management Training, FSI_Crisis_MgmtIdea@state.gov.

For questions regarding consular issues in a crisis, please contact the Crisis Management division of CA/OCS/ACS - CA-Crisis-Mgt@state.gov.

For questions regarding EAPs, please contact DS/IP/SPC/EP, 571-345-2785, VerrierRP@state.gov.

For questions regarding EMS or to schedule training, please contact HR/EX/SDD, 703-875-5401, BerdequezMR@state.gov or the HR Help Desk, HRHelpDesk@state.gov.

For questions regarding support for evacuees, please contact FLO, 202-647-1076, FLOAskEvacuations@state.gov.

CONCLUSION

¶21. (U) While the Department stands by ready to assist posts during crisis situations, it is incumbent upon posts to prepare for various contingencies and be aware of best practices when responding to a crisis. Please study this cable carefully and implement any appropriate changes.

¶22. (U) Minimize considered.
CLINTON